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Vacation Days

in the

Battlement National Forest



ISLAND LAKE

United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

1919

VACATION DAYS IN THE BATTLEMENT NATIONAL FOREST

A LAND OF LAKES AND MOUNTAINS.

A RARE mingling of lakes and mountains, offering to the lover of nature and the out-of-doors every opportunity for enjoyment, is found in the Battlement National Forest, situated on the west slope of the Continental Divide, between the Gunnison and Grand Rivers, in Colorado. Here, on two great flat-topped ridges or tablelands, known as the Grand and Battlement Mesas, standing high above rich agricultural valleys, are hundreds of catchment-basin lakes, the result of ancient volcanic action. The largest of these, Island Lake, covers some 500 acres; the smallest has a water area of 10 or 12 acres. Above them rise tree-covered slopes, and from them flow streams which break through the basaltic rim of the tablelands into the valleys below. Both streams and lakes offer fine trout fishing; and throughout the Forest are park areas, dotted with groves of aspen and groups of balsam fir and Engelmann spruce, to gladden the heart of the camper.

The largest bodies of water in the Forest—Island, Eggleston, Ward, Alexander, and Barren Lakes, in the Grand Mesa region; Cottonwood Lakes, Numbers One and Two; Mesa Lakes, Numbers One and Two; Big Creek Lake, on Big Creek; Trickle Park Lake, on Surface Creek; and Leon Lake, at the head of East Surface Creek—can all be reached by auto or wagon road from Grand Junction, De Beque, or Delta, on the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad.

Those who come to the Battlement National Forest for recreation will find an ideal summer climate, with warm days and cool nights. Visitors may camp anywhere on National Forest land and stay as long as they like. There are no restrictions to be observed by pleasure seekers in the National Forests, except such as are necessary to protect the Forest resources and safeguard public health. Care with fire and proper camp sanitation are practically all that is asked of the visitor. The public is invited to enjoy the recreational features of the Battlement National Forest to the fullest extent.

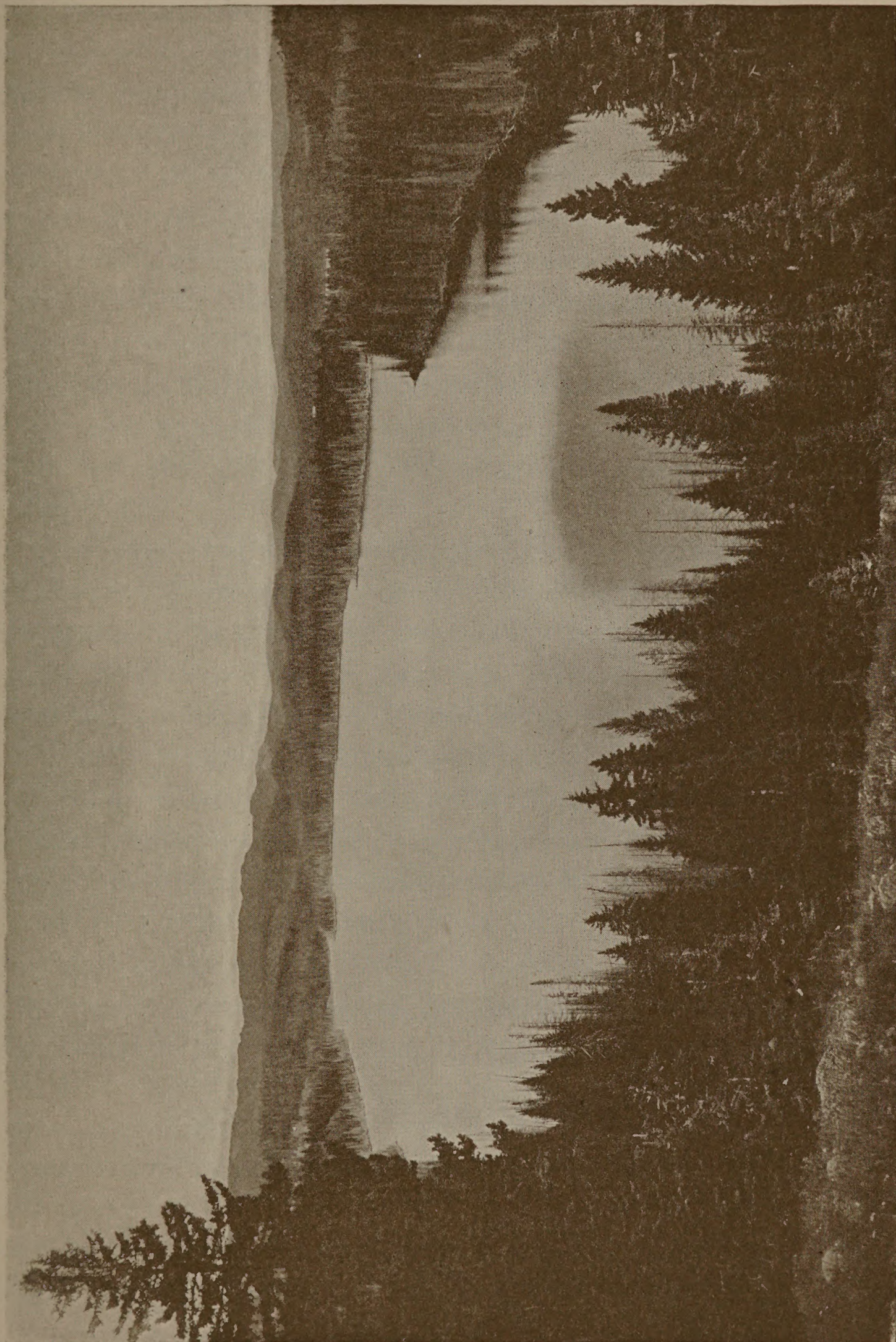
CAMPING GROUNDS.

On all of the streams in the Forest are any number of places to camp, many of them accessible by wagon and automobile. The more attractive locations, however, higher up on the mesas, where the fishing is best, the horse feed most abundant, and the flowers most beautiful and fragrant, and where the traveler is likely to see game animals and wild life of all kinds, can be reached only with pack and saddle animals. So far as fishing is concerned, every one knows that trout do not bite as readily in a stream that is heavily fished, no matter how often it may be stocked, as in less frequented waters. To many, one of the greatest attractions of the Battlement National Forest will be the vast unfrequented areas where those who desire to enjoy the solitude and grandeur of the mountains may travel for days without meeting other tourists on the trail.

FISHING STREAMS.

Streams which afford excellent fishing are described in the following paragraphs:

Mesa Creek heads on the north slope of Grand Mesa and flows north into Plateau Creek. It is accessible from the town of Mesa, and is 24 miles from De Beque and 35 miles from Grand Junction. Native and rainbow trout are plentiful.



VIEW OF A PORTION OF THE BATTEMENT NATIONAL FOREST

Cottonwood Creek has its source on the north slope of Grand Mesa and flows north into Plateau Creek. It is accessible from the town of Molina, and is 30 miles distant from De Beque and 40 miles from Grand Junction. Native and rainbow trout abound.

Big Creek is a fairly large stream which heads on the north slope of Grand Mesa and flows north into Plateau Creek. It is accessible by motor from Collbran and is 35 miles by auto road from De Beque and 50 miles by auto from Grand Junction. The stream is well stocked with native trout.

Ward Creek is a comparatively small creek that heads on the south slope of Grand Mesa, in the Grand Mesa Lakes region. It is accessible by wagon and is 20 miles from Delta. Native and rainbow trout are plentiful.

Surface Creek is one of the largest streams. Its source is Leon Lake on the top of Grand Mesa. The first good fishing in the stream is 20 miles by wagon road from Delta. Native and rainbow trout may be caught in abundance.

Buzzard Creek heads on the north slope of Grand Mesa and flows northeast into Plateau Creek. It is reached by auto road from De Beque and Grand Junction to a point 9 miles east of Collbran, which is 30 miles by auto from De Beque and 50 miles from Grand Junction. The first good fishing is 10 miles farther upstream by a rough wagon road. The stream is fully stocked with native trout.

East Muddy Creek heads on the south slope of Grand Mesa and flows northeast into the Gunnison River. Good native trout fishing in this stream is reached by wagon road from Paonia, distant 30 miles.

SUMMER-HOME SITES.

The south portion of the Battlement National Forest contains many beautiful and accessible summer-home sites. At least ten different areas are favorably situated for this purpose, affording attractive locations for approximately 2,000 summer homes. In general, the

sites have gradual slopes, with frontage on beautiful lakes and streams abounding in native, eastern brook, and rainbow trout. They are well drained, and the homes can be located in small open parks with a few scattering coniferous trees either on or along the boundaries of the individual areas, and generally with beautiful bodies of timber in the background. The foreground usually will afford extended vistas of mountain country—timbered ridges, open parks, and lakes of every size and shape. All the areas are accessible by good wagon roads, and some by automobile roads. Their altitudes vary from 9,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level. The climate is favorable for visitors during July, August, September, and October only. During the other eight months severe weather and bad roads make travel and outdoor life unpleasant.

The best area for summer homes on the Forest is in the Grand Mesa Lakes region, on the southern slope of Grand Mesa. Both to the north and south of the area the country breaks off rapidly, forming either precipitous cliffs or very steep rocky slopes. Between these break-offs are lava ridges, lakes, and comparatively level, open, grassy parks. The ridges and slopes bear heavy bodies of timber. Besides the natural lakes, a great many dams have been constructed in the basins, forming artificial lakes in which water is stored for irrigation. Within the boundaries of this area are about 300 acres of deeded land owned by a private company and used for resort purposes. The entire area is easily accessible from Delta, Grand Junction, Palisade, and De Beque, on the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. The town of Cedaredge, in a thickly settled agricultural community, is 16 miles distant, on the road to Delta, another 12 miles farther, making a total distance of 28 miles from the railroad to the Grand Mesa Lakes.

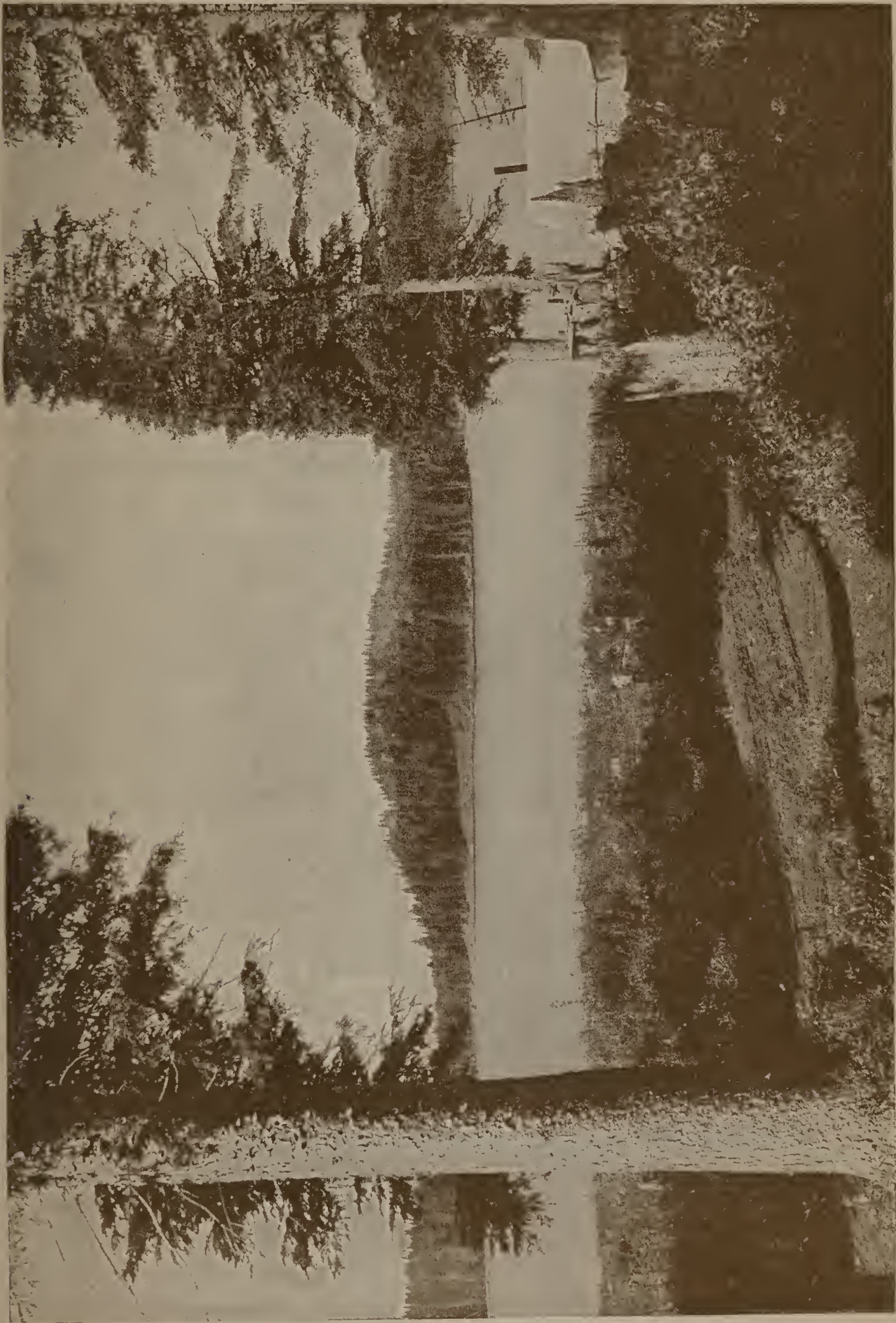
The next best area is in the vicinity of the Cottonwood Lakes, on a bench on the north slope of Grand Mesa. Here are many lakes, both natural and artificial, the shores of which afford very attractive home sites. To the north are precipitous cliffs, and to the south

steep wooded slopes. The bench itself is broken up by lava-rock peaks and ridges, but contains many beautiful open, grassy parks and attractive aspects. The lakes and streams abound with native and rainbow trout. At present the area can be reached only by a rough and steep wagon road from Molina, a small town in a thickly settled agricultural community, up Cottonwood Creek. Molina is connected with the main automobile road in Plateau Valley, which in turn connect with the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad at De Beque and Grand Junction. This region will be made more accessible in the near future by the construction of an auto road from Cottonwood Lakes east to the Grand Mesa auto road, which runs from Delta north across Grand Mesa to the Plateau Valley, where it connects with the "Midland Trail." It is 14 miles by wagon road from the Cottonwood Lakes to Molina.

The third best area for summer homes is the Mesa Lake site, located on a bench on the north slope of Grand Mesa. This area is similar in every respect to that in the Cottonwood Lakes region. It is accessible at present only by a rough wagon road from the town of Mesa, 12 miles distant, on the main auto roads to De Beque and Grand Junction.

POINTS AFFORDING FINE VIEWS.

Many high peaks and promontories on the edge of the Grand Mesa afford stirring views of the Battlement National Forest and the fertile agricultural valleys adjoining. On the west side of the Grand Mesa are beautiful panoramic views of the extremely broken and steep rim rocks of the Mesa, as well as of the rich fruit and hay ranches in the Grand and Gunnison Valleys. The viewpoints are from 6 to 12 miles from the agricultural settlement, but are 5,000 to 6,000 feet higher in altitude. They may be reached by wagon road from Grand Junction to the boundary of the Forest, 12 miles distant, from which point the remainder of the trip, varying from 2 to 4 miles, must be made by saddle horse or on foot.



BARREN LAKE

On the north rim of Grand Mesa is an observation point, 5,000 feet above the surrounding country, which affords a splendid view of the lakes, forested slopes, and rough mesa areas to the north and south, together with an excellent vista of the North Fork Valley from Cedar-edge toward Delta. This point can be reached from Grand Junction or De Beque by way of Mesa Lakes and the town of Mesa to within 2 miles, the rest of the distance being made on foot or saddle horse.

BIG-GAME AREAS.

Big game is most abundant in the Battlement Forest on the headwaters of East and West Divide Creeks, on Buzzard Creek on the north slope of Grand Mesa, and at the headwaters of East and West Muddy and Hubbard Creeks on the south slope of Grand Mesa, an area of 100,000 acres. Here are found elk and deer, while grizzly, black, and brown bear are scattered throughout all parts of the Forest. A small band of mountain sheep graze on the northwest point of Battlement Mesa, which can be reached by auto from De Beque, 12 miles distant. The big-game areas on the north portion of the Forest are accessible by wagon roads or pack trails from New Castle or Rifle, on the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, and those on the south portion from Paonia also on the railroad.

WATERFALLS.

In the Forest are a number of waterfalls which will repay a visit. The falls of Cottonwood Creek, though not of great size, are very beautiful. The stream comes out of Cottonwood Lake, located on a high, rough bench, and within 100 yards after leaving the lake falls over a precipitous cliff for a distance of three-eighths of a mile. The best view of this falls may be secured from the fish hatchery, just below on the stream.

Hubbard Creek Falls, in Hubbard Creek Canyon, below the Wade Ranch, are made up of a series of small cascades. The stream itself is comparatively large. The water falls approximately 500 feet in a distance of one-sixteenth of a mile.

LEON PEAK FIRE LOOKOUT STATION.

Upon the summit of Leon Peak, 10,954 feet high, on the crest of the ridge of Grand Mesa, a fire lookout station has been established by the Forest Service. From this point a large portion of the Battlement Forest can be seen. While the station was built primarily for fire-observation purposes, it offers an excellent opportunity to the summer traveler to view a large area of mountain forest. The numberless lakes nestled in the catchment basins between the long lava ridges offer a wonderful spectacle as the passing clouds throw this one into bold contrast of direct sunlight, and the next one into the darkness of shadow. One lake may be still, while another suddenly presents a troubled surface, caused by a passing gust of wind.

From De Beque and Grand Junction an automobile road goes to within 4 miles of the lookout station; the remainder of the distance, to within half a mile of the top, can be made by saddle horse; thence a foot trail leads to the summit. The total distance to the peak from Grand Junction is 55 miles, and from De Beque 40 miles.

FIRE PROTECTION AND CAMP SANITATION.

The Leon Peak lookout forms but a part of the system of fire protection by which the resources of the Battlement National Forest are guarded during dry periods of the year. These resources are the property of the people of the United States, and contribute toward their prosperity and toward the enjoyment of those who visit the Forests. The greater percentage of the fires which occur are caused by human agencies.

The Forest Service, which administers the National Forests, desires to secure the cooperation of visitors in preventing fires rather than to prosecute under the State and Federal laws those who are careless with fire in the Forests. Accordingly, everyone is earnestly requested to be extremely careful with fire when in the woods and to report promptly any unextinguished fire which he may see. If a fire can be extinguished by a visitor unaided, his prompt action will be greatly appreciated. Telephones, which may be used for reporting fires, are located at various points throughout the Forest, or the traveler may find it more convenient to notify the nearest ranger personally.

The number of campers in the National Forests increases steadily, and in order that camp grounds may prove inviting and attractive it is necessary to keep them clean. Tin cans and camp refuse should be buried, and discarded clothing, papers, and other inflammable material burned. A little care and thoughtfulness in this regard will add greatly to the comfort and pleasure of other visitors who follow.

RESORTS.

The towns of Paonia, Delta, and Hotchkiss on the railroad, and Collbran and Mesa just off the railroad in the Plateau Valley, offer good accommodations to those preparing for a trip into the Battlement Forest or looking up a summer-home location. Different portions of the Forest are accessible for one-day trips from these towns. Accommodations are also available at a summer resort at Alexander Lake, reached by automobile from Delta, distance 28 miles.

LINES OF TRAVEL.

Automobile travel is not practicable in many parts of the Battlement Forest, although a few good motor roads lead to the most frequented recreation centers. The Forest, however, is surrounded by auto highways, which offer the traveler a means of reaching it from all directions.

A good auto road connects Grand Junction and De Beque, on the "Midland Trail," with Collbran in the Plateau Valley. An auto road also runs from Delta, on the "Rainbow Route," to Cedaredge and the Grand Mesa Lakes region. All the principal highways which form the network of approach to the Forest traverse the thriving agricultural communities in the valleys and on the mesas and plateaus of the region.

Wagon roads extend from the railroad points both north and south of the Forest up the principal streams to the surface of the mesas, and in many cases either to the top or to within a short distance of the summit of the ridges. Numberless trails, built and maintained by the Forest Service, also traverse the higher and less frequented parts of the tablelands.

Further information regarding the resources and recreation features of the Battlement National Forest can be obtained from the Forest Supervisor, Grand Junction, Colo.



ROAD MAPS ARE PLACED AT CONVENIENT POINTS IN THE NATIONAL FORESTS FOR THE GUIDANCE OF VISITORS



MAP OF THE BATLEMENT NATIONAL FOREST

The solid black line represents Forest boundary. Distance between solid light lines (township boundaries) represent 6 miles

